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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Friday, January 6, 1939

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS". Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

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Some people always make New Year's resolutions. Others never do. Maybe that's what divides us into believers and skeptics. If so, I have a special message today for the believers. Not that I intend to shut the skeptics out. They probably want to make a fresh start every New Year, just as much as any of us.

I don't blame the skeptics for jeering at what they call "impossible" resolutions. I don't believe in that kind either. But the ones I'm going to offer you are practical hints to the homemaker, on how to make life happier and better for herself and her family during 1939. They come from no lesser source than the Bureau of Home Economics in Washington.

The first resolution on the list is, "I RESOLVE TO MAKE A SPENDING PLAN." I don't think any list of New Year's resolutions would be complete without mention of the family budget. No outsider can make as good a spending plan for your family as they can make for themselves. Specialists say the family council is the best starting point for a budget. In the council the good of the whole group comes first and each individual has his "say". As homemaker, you know the family needs and finances best, and can be starter and promoter for the plan.

And next comes, "I RESOLVE TO PLAN THE FAMILY DIET." You simply have to plan if you expect to serve your family the right foods and buy them at the right prices. You'll find the best plans come in 52 parts, one for every week---weekly shopping lists with menus to match; and once a week, a systematic tour of the markets and the food storage pantry.

And the third resolution is labeled, "Designed especially for the rural homemaker", but we can all listen in. It is: "I RESOLVE TO PLAN THE FAMILY HOME PRODUCED FOOD." Which means, if you live in the country, you have "the edge" on the rest of us, and can plan to produce many of the foods on the farm, that the rest of us find on our grocery bills. You can plan a garden that will give you a winter canned goods supply as well as vegetables all through the summer. And probably you will have your own milk and eggs and can produce part of your own meat.

Next comes something more on foods, "I RESOLVE TO READ THE LABELS ON THE FOODS I BUY." Read the labels so you'll know what you are buying and won't have to guess. Look to see whether eggs are graded, and if there is a "score" mark on the butter. And if you buy fresh meat, is there a "little purple stamp" to tell you it has been passed by a Federal meat inspector and marked as wholesome. In packaged goods read the weight, so you can't be fooled by the size of the package. And if you buy canned goods see whether the label tells you the grade and other things you want to know.

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The next resolution may seem rather odd, "I RESOLVE TO BE AN HONEST COOK." Which means, are you guilty of feeding vitamins and minerals to the kitchen sink? You are, if you throw away the water you cook vegetables in, or the oil from a can of salmon. And do you ever cheat, by feeding part of the vegetables to the garbage can? If so, in the future, watch those parings.

And the next three resolutions are calculated to make things easier for the homemaker---and of course, that means easier for all the rest of the family at the same time.

First is, "I RESOLVE TO MAKE MY KITCHEN A BETTER WORKSHOP." I think every one of us homemakers can keep this one if we study our own kitchens like a real efficiency expert. Watch the way work moves in the kitchen. If it's well-planned, when you work you should move around your kitchen, not criss-cross from side to side. See that you have all equipment and utensils very near where you use them. This is what specialists call "grouping into work centers". Work tables and sinks that are too high or too low, wear you out before you realize the cause. To test whether your work table is the correct height, see if it is easy for you to flatten the palms of your hands on the table while you are standing in front of it. The sink should be a little lower, so that your knuckles just reach the bottom or "floor" of the sink.

And here's another resolution about the kitchen. "I RESOLVE TO KEEP HANDY TOOLS IN HANDY PLACES." Some of the handiest tools cost very little. On the approved list I find rubber scrapers, small brushes that fit into coffee-pot spouts, and kitchen scissors. And there are rotary sieves, peelers with handles, fraction cups, and many others. Of course, the homemaker's right-hand assistants are a well-shaped sharp paring knife and an accurate measuring cup. Better still, have two or more sets of these, one at each work center.

And next: "I RESOLVE TO SIT AT WORK WHENEVER POSSIBLE." Sit, don't stand when you get the vegetables ready for dinner, mix a batter, or when you do your ironing. Did you know that some of the new ironing boards can be adjusted to the right heights for sitting or standing?

And last of all, "I RESOLVE TO MAKE THE FAMILY MEAL A HAPPY OCCASION." This is one that doesn't stop with the homemaker. Every member of the family can do his part. Dinnertime is the family social hour in many a home. Make it an occasion to look forward to.

And may I close with a good wish for 1939? Happy New Year and the best of luck with your resolutions.

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